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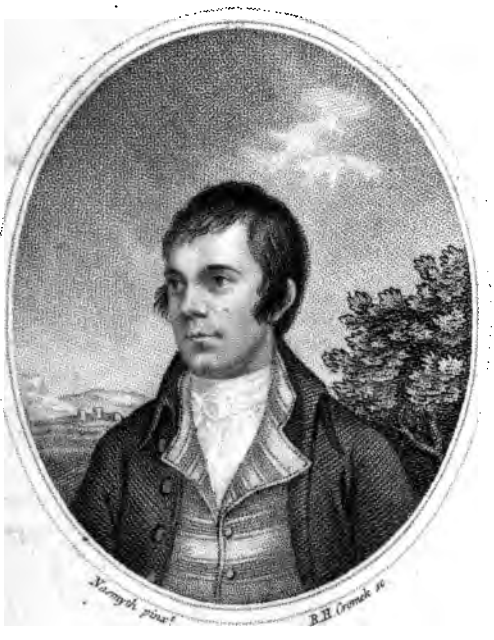

Robt Burns.

Published by Cadell & Davies, Strand, March 1st 1804.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

A NEW EDITION.

INCLUDING THE PIECES PUBLISHED IN HIS CORRESPONDENCE,

WITH HIS SONGS AND FRAGMENTS.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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ERRATUM.

Vol. II. p. 169. l. 11. *for* Her, *read* Here.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE,

&c.

ROBERT BURNS was born on the 29th day of January, 1759, in a small house about two miles from the town of Ayr in Scotland. The family name, which the poet and his brother modernized into *Burns*, was originally *Burnes* or *Burness*. Their father, William, appears to have been early inured to poverty and hardships, which he bore with pious resignation, and endeavoured to alleviate by industry and economy. After various attempts to gain a livelihood, he took a lease of seven acres of land, with a view of commencing nurseryman and public gardener; and having built a house upon it with his own hands, (an instance of patient ingenuity by no means uncommon among his countrymen in humble life,) he married, December 1757, AGNES BROWN *. The first fruit of his marriage was ROBERT, the subject of the present sketch.

* This excellent woman is still living, in the family of her son Gilbert, in Dumfries-shire.

In his sixth year, ROBERT was sent to a school at Alloway Miln, about a mile distant from his father's house, where he made considerable proficiency in reading and writing, and where he discovered an inclination for books not very common at so early an age. With these, however, he appears at that time to have been rather scantily supplied; but what he could obtain, he read with avidity and improvement. About the age of thirteen or fourteen, he was sent to the parish school of Dalrymple, where he increased his acquaintance with English grammar, and gained some knowledge of the French language, of which he was probably fond, because he traced in it many of those words which are in our days reckoned *broad* or *pure* Scotch. Latin was also recommended to him; but he was not induced to make any great progress in it.

The far greater part of his time, however, was employed on his father's farm, which, in spite of much industry, became so unproductive as to involve the family in great distress. This early portion of affliction is said to have been, in a great measure, the cause of that depression of spirits of which our poet often complained, and during which his sufferings appear to have been very acute. His father having taken another farm, the speculation was yet

more fatal, and involved his affairs in complete ruin. He died Feb. 13, 1784, leaving behind him the character of a good and wise man, and an affectionate father, who, under all his misfortunes, struggled to procure his children an excellent education; and endeavoured, both by precept and example, to form their minds to religion and virtue. It appears that his children felt the high obligation such a parent confers, and bestowed on his memory every tender and grateful testimony of honourable respect and filial piety.

It was between the fifteenth and sixteenth year of his age, that ROBERT, as he himself informs us, first "committed the sin of rhyme." Having formed a boyish affection for a female who was his companion in the toils of the field, he composed a song which is inserted in the present edition of his works*; but which, however extraordinary from one at his age, and in his circumstances, is far inferior to any of his subsequent performances. He was at this time "an ungainly, aukward boy," unacquainted with the world, but who occasionally had picked up some notions of history, literature, and criticism, from the few books within his reach. These, he informs us, were Salmon's and Guthrie's

* Vol. iii. p. 77.

Geographical Grammars, the Spectator, Pope's Works, some plays of Shakspeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, the Pantheon, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardener's Directory, Boyle's Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, a Select Collection of English Songs, and Hervey's Meditations. Of this motley assemblage, it may readily be supposed, that some would be studied, and some read superficially. There is reason to think, however, that he perused the works of the poets with such attention as, assisted by his naturally vigorous capacity, soon directed his taste, and enabled him to discriminate tenderness and sublimity from affectation and bombast.

It appears afterwards, that during the space of seven years in which the family lived at Tarbolton, where his father's last farm was situated, that is, from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth year of ROBERT'S age, he made no considerable literary improvement. His accessions of knowledge, indeed, or his opportunities of reading, could not be frequent, involved as he was in the common difficulties of his family: but still no external circumstances could prevent the innate peculiarities of his cha-

racter from displaying themselves, always to the astonishment, and sometimes to the terror of his neighbours. He was distinguished by a vigorous understanding, and an untameable spirit. His resentments were quick, and, although not durable, expressed with a volubility of indignation which could not but silence and overwhelm his humble and illiterate associates; while the occasional effusions of his muse on temporary subjects, which were handed about in manuscript, raised him to a local superiority that seemed the earnest of a more extended fame. His first motive to compose verses, as has been already noticed, was his early and warm attachment to the fair sex. His favourites were in the humblest walks of life; but, during his passion, he elevated them to Lauras and Saccharissas. His attachments, however, at this time, were of the purer kind, and his constant theme the happiness of the married state; to obtain a suitable provision for which, he engaged in partnership with a flax-dresser, hoping, probably, to attain by degrees the rank of a manufacturer. But this speculation was attended with very little success, and was finally ended by an accidental fire.

This calamity, the distresses of his family, and a disappointment in a love affair, threw him for some

time into a state of melancholy, which he seems to have considered as constitutional; but from which he was roused by an accidental acquaintance with some jovial companions, who gave a more gay turn to his sentiments. On his father's death, he took a farm in conjunction with his brother, with the honourable view of providing for their large and orphan family. On this farm our poet entered, with a resolution to be wise: he read books on agriculture, calculated crops, and attended markets. But here, too, he was doomed to be unfortunate, although, in his brother GILBERT, he had a coadjutor of excellent sense, a man of uncommon powers both of thought and expression. A little book which ROBERT purchased for making farming memorandums, has since been found, covered with snatches of songs, and memorandums of lyric poets.

During his residence on this farm with his brother, he formed a connexion with a young woman, the consequences of which could not be long concealed. In this dilemma, the imprudent couple agreed to make a legal acknowledgment of an irregular and private marriage, and projected that she should remain with her father, while he, having lost all hopes of success at home, was to go to

Jamaica "to push his fortune." This proceeding, however romantic it may appear, would have rescued the lady's character, consonant to the laws of Scotland, which allow of greater latitude in the terms and period of the marriage-contract than those of England; but it did not satisfy her father, who insisted on having all the written documents respecting the marriage cancelled, and by this unfeeling measure, he intended that it should be rendered void. The daughter consented, probably under the awe of parental authority; and our poet, though with much anguish and reluctance, was also obliged to submit. Divorced, now, from all he held dear in the world, he had no resource but in his projected voyage to Jamaica, which was prevented by one of those circumstances that, in common cases, might pass without observation, but which eventually laid the foundation of his future fame. For once, his *poverty* stood his friend. Had he been provided with money to pay for his passage to Jamaica, he might have set sail, and been forgot. But he was, we may say, fortunately destitute of every necessary for the voyage, and was therefore advised to raise a sum of money by publishing his poems in the way of subscription. They were accordingly printed at Kilmarnock, in the year 1786, in a small volume which was encouraged by subscriptions for about 350 copies.

It is hardly possible, say his countrymen who were on the spot at this time, to express with what eager admiration and delight these poems were every where received. Old and young, high and low, grave and gay, learned and ignorant, all were alike delighted, agitated, transported. Such transports would naturally find their way into the bosom of the author, especially when he found that, instead of the necessity of flying from his native land, he was now encouraged to go to Edinburgh and superintend the publication of a second edition.

This was the most momentous period of his life, in which he was to emerge from obscurity and poverty to distinction and wealth. In the metropolis, he was soon introduced into the company and received the homage of men of literature, rank, and taste; and his appearance and behaviour at this time, as they exceeded all expectation, heightened and kept up the curiosity which his works had excited. He became the object of universal admiration and fondness, and was feasted, caressed, and flattered, as if it had been impossible to reward his merit too highly, or to grace his triumphal entry by too many solemnities. But what contributed principally to extend his fame into the sister kingdom, was his fortunate introduction to

Mr. MACKENZIE, who, in the 97th paper of the LOUNGER, then published periodically at Edinburgh, recommended his poems by judicious specimens, and such generous and elegant criticism, as placed the poet at once in the rank he was destined to hold. From this time, whether present or absent, BURNS and his genius were the objects which engrossed all attention and all conversation.

It cannot be surprising if so much adulation, in this new scene of life, produced effects on BURNS which were the source of much of the unhappiness of his future life: for, while he was admitted into the company of men of taste, delicacy, and virtue, he was also seduced, by pressing invitations, into the society of those whose habits, without being very gross, are yet too social and inconsiderate. It is to be regretted that he had little resolution to withstand those attentions which flattered his merit, and appeared to be the just respect due to a degree of superiority of which he could not avoid being conscious. Among the loose and gay, he met with much of that deference which enslaves while it seems to fawn; and the festive indulgences of these his companions and professed admirers were temptations which often became irresistible, because a generous mind thinks it ungrateful and un-

kind to resist them. Among his superiors in rank and merit, his behaviour was in general decorous and unassuming; but among his more equal or inferior associates, he was permitted to dictate the mirth of the evening, and repaid the attention and submission of his hearers by sallies of wit, which from one of his birth and education, in addition to their sterling value, had all the fascination of wonder. His introduction, about the same time, into certain convivial clubs of higher rank was, to say the least, an injudicious mark of respect to one who, whatever his talents, was destined, unless very uncommon and liberal patronage should interpose, to return to the plough, and to the simple and frugal enjoyments of a peasant's life.

During his residence at Edinburgh, his finances were considerably improved by the new edition of his poems; and this enabled him not only to partake of the pleasures of that city, but to visit several other parts of his native country. He left Edinburgh, May 6, 1787, and in the course of his journey was hospitably received at the houses of many gentlemen of worth and learning, who introduced him to their friends and neighbours, and repeated the applauses on which he had feasted in the metropolis. Of this tour he wrote a journal,

which still exists, and of which some specimens have been published *. He afterwards travelled into England as far as Carlisle. In the beginning of June he arrived at Mossgiel, near Mauchlin, in Ayrshire, after an absence of six months, during which he had experienced a happy reverse of fortune, to which the hopes of few men in his situation could have aspired. He performed another journey the same year, of which there are a few minutes in the work already referred to, and which furnished him with subjects for his muse. His companion in some of these tours was a Mr. NICOL, a man of considerable talents, but eccentric manners, who was endeared to BURNS not only by the warmth of his friendship, but by a certain congeniality of sentiment and agreement in habits. This sympathy, in some other instances, made our poet capriciously fond of companions who, in the eyes of men of more regular conduct, and more refined notions, were insufferable.

During the greater part of the winter 1787-8, BURNS again resided in Edinburgh, and entered with peculiar relish into its gaieties. By his patrons of the higher order he was still respected and caressed; but as the singularities of his manner dis-

* Dr. CURRIE's Life of BURNS, Vol. I. p. 163. & seqq.

played themselves more openly, and as the novelty of his appearance wore off, he became less an object of general curiosity and attention. He lingered long in this place, however, in hopes that some situation would have been offered which might place him in independence: but as it did not seem probable that any thing of that kind would occur soon, he began seriously to reflect that he had as yet acquired no permanent situation in the world, and that tours of pleasure and praise would not provide for the wants of a family. Influenced by these considerations, and probably ashamed of a delay which was not in unison with his native independence of mind, he quitted Edinburgh in the month of February 1788. Finding himself master of nearly £500, from the sale of his poems, after discharging all expences, he took the farm of Ellisland, near Dumfries, and stocked it with part of this money, besides generously advancing £200 to his brother GILBERT, who was struggling with many difficulties in the farm of Mossgiel. He was now also legally united to Mrs. BURNS, who joined him, with their children, about the end of this year.

In his common-place book, we find some reflections on his new situation, characteristic of his peculiar temper, and of that romantic spirit, which

had not been wholly subdued by the disappointment of the hopes he was encouraged to cherish at Edinburgh. He repines at the exchange of pleasure for labour; and, although he declares he had never seen "where he could make a better choice of a wife," he seems to place his marriage to the account of necessity. Yet he was very far from being deficient in tenderness and affection for Mrs. Burns, who, indeed, appears highly deserving of every praise. Quitting, however, these speculations for more active pursuits, he now rebuilt the dwelling-house on his farm, to render it more commodious to his family; and during his engagement in this object, and while the regulations of the farm had the charm of novelty, he passed his time in more tranquillity than he had lately experienced. But, unfortunately, his old habits were rather interrupted than broken; and his fame at Edinburgh, which had reached this comparative retirement, gave a consequence to the poet which the mere farmer could never have expected. He was again invited into social parties, with the additional recommendation of a man who had seen the world, and lived with the great; and again partook of those irregularities for which men of warm imaginations, and conversation-talents, find too many apologies. But a circumstance now occurred which presented

a new series of temptations, and threw many obstacles in his way as a farmer.

It has already been noticed, that BURNS very fondly cherished those notions of independence, and those feelings of an independent spirit that are dear to the young and ingenuous, and were perhaps not less so to him, because so often sung by the greatest of our poets. But he had not matured these notions by reflexion; and he was now to learn, that a little knowledge of the world will overturn many such airy fabrics. If we may form any judgment, however, from his correspondence, his expectations were not very extravagant, since he expected only that some of his illustrious patrons would have placed him, on whom they had bestowed the honours of genius, in a situation where his exertions might have been uninterrupted by the fatigues of labour, and the calls of want. Disappointed in this, he now formed a design of applying for the office of exciseman, as a kind of resource in case his expectations from the farm should be baffled. By the interest of one of his friends, this object was accomplished; and after the usual forms were gone through, he was appointed exciseman, or, as it is vulgarly called, *gauger* of the district in which he lived.

It soon appeared, as might naturally have been expected, that the duties of this office were incompatible with his previous employment. "His farm," says Dr. CURRIE, "was in a great measure abandoned to his servants, while he betook himself to the duties of his new appointment. He might still, indeed, be seen in the spring, directing his plough, a labour in which he excelled, or with a white sheet, containing his seed-corn, slung across his shoulders, striding with measured steps, along his turned-up furrows, and scattering the grain in the earth. But his farm no longer occupied the principal part of his care or his thoughts. It was not at Ellisland that he was now in general to be found: —Mounted on horse-back, this high-minded poet was pursuing the defaulters of the revenue, among the hills and vales of Nithsdale, his roving eye wandering over the charms of nature, and *muttering his wayward fancies* as he moved along *."

About this time (1792), he was solicited, and cheerfully consented to give his aid to a beautiful work, intitled, "A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice: to which are added, introductory and concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Piano Forte and Violin, by

* Dr. CURRIE's Life, p. 290.

PLEYEL and KOZELUCH; with select and characteristic Verses by the most admired Scottish Poets, &c." This work was projected by Mr. GEORGE THOMSON of Edinburgh, in whom BURNS would have found a generous employer, had he not, from motives understood only by himself, refused every offer of remuneration. He wrote, however, with attention and without delay, for this work, all the songs which form the third volume of the present edition; to which we have added those he contributed to the "Scots Musical Museum," conducted by Mr. JAMES JOHNSON, and published in volumes, from the year 1787 to 1797.

BURNS also found leisure to form a society for purchasing and circulating books among the farmers of the neighbourhood; but these, however praiseworthy employments, still interrupted the attention he ought to have bestowed on his farm, which became so unproductive that he found it convenient to resign it, and, disposing of his stock and crop, removed to a small house which he had taken in Dumfries, a short time previous to his lyric engagement with Mr. THOMSON. He had now received from the Board of Excise, in consequence of his diligence and integrity, an appointment to a new district, the emoluments of which amounted to about seventy pounds sterling *per annum*.

While at Dumfries, his temptations to irregularity, partly arising from the wandering and unsettled duties of his office, and partly from the *killing kindness* of his friends, recurred so frequently as nearly to overpower his resolutions, which were of a very opposite kind, and which he appears to have formed with a perfect knowledge of what is right and prudent. During his quiet moments, however, he was enlarging his fame by those admirable compositions he sent to Mr. THOMSON; and his tempory sallies and flashes of imagination, in the merriment of the social table, still bespoke a genius of wonderful strength and of high capti-
vations. It has been said, indeed, with great justice, that, extraordinary as his *poems* are, they afford but an inadequate proof of the powers of their author, or of that acuteness of observation, and fertility of expression, he displayed on the most common topics in conversation. In the society, likewise, of persons of taste and respectability, he could refrain from those indulgences which among his more constant companions probably formed his chief recommendation.

The emoluments of his office, which now composed his whole fortune, soon appeared insufficient for the maintenance of his family. He did not,

indeed, from the first, expect that they could; but he had hopes of promotion at no great distance of time, and would probably have attained it, if he had not forfeited the favour of the Board of Excise, by some conversations on the state of public affairs, the Revolution of France, &c. which were deemed highly improper, and were probably reported to the Board in a way not calculated to lessen their effect. That he should have been deceived by the plausible appearance of affairs in France during the early periods of the revolution, is not surprising; he only caught a portion of an enthusiasm which was then very general: but that he should have raised his imagination to a warmth beyond his fellows, will appear very singular, when we consider that he had hitherto distinguished himself as a Jacobite, an adherent to the unfortunate house of Stewart. Yet however inconsistent this may appear, he had now uttered opinions which were thought dangerous; and information being given to the Board, an inquiry was instituted into his conduct, the result of which, although rather favourable, was not so much so as to re-instate him in the good opinion of the Commissioners. Interest was necessary to enable him to retain his office; and he was informed that his promotion was deferred, and must depend on his future behaviour.

He is said to have defended himself, on this occasion, in a letter addressed to one of the Board, with much spirit and skill. He wrote another letter to a gentleman, who, hearing that he had been dismissed from his situation, proposed a subscription for him. In this last, he gives an account of the whole transaction, and endeavours to vindicate his loyalty; he also contends for an independence of spirit, which he certainly possessed, and which, in many instances, he decidedly proved, but which yet appears to have partaken of that ardent zeal and extravagance of sentiment which are fitter to point a stanza than to conduct a life. "Burns," he exclaims, "was a poor man from his birth, and an excise man by necessity; but,—I *will* say it! the sterling of his honest worth, poverty could not debase; and his independent, British spirit, oppression might bend, but could not subdue." This is offered in answer to a report that he had made submissions, for the sake of his office, unworthy of his character.

Another passage in this letter is too characteristic to be omitted.—"Often," says our indignant poet, "in blasting anticipation have I listened to some future hackney scribbler, with heavy malice of savage stupidity, exultingly asserting that

Burns, notwithstanding the fanfaronade of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held up to public view, and to public estimation, as a man of some genius, yet quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, dwindled into a paltry exciseman; and sunk out the rest of his insignificant existence, in the meanest of pursuits, and among the lowest of mankind."

This striking passage has no doubt often been read with sympathy, and often perhaps with indignation. That Burns should have embraced the only opportunity in his power to provide for his family, can be no topic of censure or ridicule, even if the situation he acquired had been of a lower denomination; and however incompatible with the cultivation either of land or of genius the business of an exciseman may be, we have yet to learn that there is any thing of moral turpitude or disgrace attached to it. It was not his choice, for he had no choice; it was the only help within his reach: and he laid hold of it. But that, "after being held up to public view and to public estimation as a man," not only "of some," but of very superior and extensive genius, he should not have found a patron generous enough, or wise enough to place

him in a situation, if not more honourable to his talents, if not connected with the labours of the pen, or in some measure promotive of his literary pursuits, yet at least free from allurements to "the sin that so easily beset him:" this is a circumstance on which the admirers of BURNS and of his patrons have found it painful to dwell.

His amiable friend Mr. MACKENZIE, in the 97th number of the LOUNGER, after mentioning the poet's design of going to the West Indies in quest of the shelter and support which Scotland had denied him, concludes that paper in words to which sufficient attention appears not to have been paid: "I trust means may be found to prevent this resolution from taking place; and that I do my country no more than justice, when I suppose her ready to stretch out the hand to cherish and retain this native poet, whose "wood-notes wild" possess so much excellence.—To repair the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit: to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and *place it where it may profit or delight the world*:—these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride."

Although we have seen, by the extract from BURNS' letter, that he deprecated the reflections which might be made on his occupation of excise-man, it may be necessary to add, that from this humble step, he foresaw all the contingencies and gradations of promotion up to a rank on which it is not usual to look with contempt. In a letter written to one of his patrons (whose name is concealed), dated 1794, he states that he is on the list of supervisors; that in two or three years he should be at the head of that list, and be appointed, as a matter of course; but that then a friend might be of service in getting him into a part of the kingdom which he would like. A supervisor's income varies from about £120 to £200 a year; but the business, he says, is "an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit." He proceeds, however, to observe, that the moment he is appointed supervisor in the common routine, he *might* be nominated on the Collector's list, "and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies from much better than two hundred a year to near a thousand. Collectors also come forward by precedency on the list, and have, besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure."

A life of literary leisure, with a decent competence, in the summit of my wishes." He then respectfully solicits the interest of his correspondent to facilitate this.

He was doomed, however, to continue in his present employment for the remainder of his days, which were not many. His constitution, which "had all the peculiarities and delicacies that belong to the temperament of genius," was now rapidly decaying; yet, although sensible that his race was nearly run, his resolutions of amendment were but feeble. His temper, amidst many struggles between principle and passion, became irritable and gloomy, and he was even insensible to the kind forgiveness and soothing attentions of his affectionate wife. In the month of June, 1796, he removed to Brow, in Annandale, about ten miles from Dumfries, to try the effect of a bathing; a remedy that at first, he imagined, relieved the rheumatic pains in his limbs, with which he had been afflicted for some months: but this was immediately followed by a new attack of fever. When brought back to his house at Dumfries, on the 18th of July, he was no longer able to stand upright. The fever increased, attended with delirium and debility, and on the 21st he expired, in the thirty-eighth year of his age. His funeral

was accompanied with military honours, not only by the *corps* of Dumfries volunteers, of which he was a member, but by the Fencible Infantry, and a regiment of the Cinque Port cavalry, then quartered in Dumfries.

He left a widow and four sons, for whom the inhabitants of Dumfries opened a subscription which, being extended to England, produced a considerable sum for their immediate necessities*. This has since been augmented by the profits of the splendid edition of his works, printed in four volumes, 8vo; to which Dr. CURRIE, of Liverpool, prefixed a life, written with so much elegance and taste, and enriched by so much ingenious disquisition on every subject connected with the character and pursuits of our poet, that it may be considered as a very important addition to English literature. It is needless to add how much the writer of the present

* Mrs. Burns continues to live in the house in which the Poet died: the eldest son, Robert, is at Glasgow college, where he enjoys a bursary, or exhibition, given him by the Duke of Hamilton. His turn is decidedly literary, and his acquirements are said to be considerable. The second, William, is at home: and the third is in London, under the kind protection of Alderman Shaw. Wallace, the fourth son, a lad of great promise, died last year of a consumption.

sketch has been indebted to a composition, which all who hereafter write or think of BURNS, must necessarily consult.

As to the person of our poet, he is described as being nearly five feet ten inches in height, and of a form that indicated agility as well as strength. His well-raised forehead, shaded with black curling hair, expressed uncommon capacity. His eyes were large, dark, full of ardour and animation. His face was well formed, and his countenance uncommonly interesting. Of his general behaviour, some *traits* have already been given. It usually bespoke a mind conscious of superior talents, not however unmixed with the affections which beget familiarity and affability. It was consequently various, according to the various modes in which he was addressed, or supposed himself to be treated: for it may easily be imagined that he often felt disrespect where none was meant. His conversation is universally allowed to have been uncommonly fascinating, and rich in wit, humour, whim, and occasionally in serious and apposite reflection. This excellence, however, proved a lasting misfortune to him: for while it procured him the friendship of men of character and taste, in whose company his humour was guarded and chaste, it had

also allurements for the lowest of mankind, who know no difference between freedom and licentiousness, and are never so completely gratified as when genius condescends to give a kind of sanction to their grossness. Yet with all his failings, no man had a quicker apprehension of right and wrong in human conduct, or a stronger sense of what was ridiculous or mean in morals or manners. His own errors he well knew and lamented, and that spirit of independence which he claimed, and so frequently exhibited, preserved him from injustice, or selfish insensibility. He died poor, but not in debt, and left behind him a name, the fame of which will not be soon eclipsed.

Of his poems, which have been so often printed, and so eagerly read, it would be unnecessary here to enter into a critical examination. All readers of taste and sensibility have agreed to assign him a high rank among the rural poets of his country. His prominent excellencies are humour, tenderness, and sublimity; a combination rarely found in modern times, unless in the writings of a few poets of the very highest fame, with whom it would be improper to compare him. As he always wrote under the impression of actual feeling, much of the character of the man may be discovered in the

poet. He executed no great work, for he never was in a situation which could afford the means of preparing, executing, and polishing a work of magnitude. His time he was compelled to borrow from labour, anxiety, and sickness. Hence his poems are short, various, and frequently irregular. It is not always easy to predict, from the beginning of them, what the conclusion or general management will be. They were probably written at one effort, and apparently with ease. He follows the guidance of an imagination, fertile in its images, but irregular in its expressions, and apt to be desultory. Hence he mixes the most affecting tenderness with humour almost coarse, and from this frequently soars to a sentiment of sublimity, a lofty flight, indicative of the highest powers of the art. Although in pursuit of flowers, he does not scruple to pick up a weed, if it has any thing singular in its appearance, or apposite in its resemblance. Yet the reader, who has been accustomed to study nature, and the varieties of the human mind, will always find something in unison with his boldest transitions.

Scenery and sentiment constitute the principal part of his poems. Characters and manners likewise enter into them, and appear with equal ad-

vantage. Having attempted no regular work, he leaves us only to conjecture, but to conjecture with the greatest probability, that, had he been possessed of the means of leisure and study, he might have produced those bold exertions which some suppose to be the soul or essence of poetry, and which have constituted the extensive fame of the greatest of poets. He always, however, viewed objects with a correct and picturesque eye. Many of those songs which he wrote with little labour, are finished sketches of nature, or rural life; and the characters and incidents in them, or in his larger poems, are strictly in truth, and will be readily acknowledged. His resources were abundant; for, however striking his delineations, he does not elevate any thing beyond its just standard, and introduces no meretricious ornaments to heighten the effect, or catch vulgar applause. His versification, it may easily be observed, is sometimes incorrect; but, as he frequently revised and retouched his works without amendment in this respect, we are inclined to think that he considered it as a secondary object, or would not gratify his critics by acknowledging what an inferior capacity might discover. Some few criticisms, it is said, he adopted, but rejected by far the greater part.

If the merit of a poet is to be estimated by comparison, BURNS has certainly surpassed his countrymen RAMSAY and FERGUSSON, the only two writers of any eminence with whom a comparison has been, or can be estimated. In his early attempts, these were the best models he had to follow; and it is evident that he had studied their works, and derived considerable improvement from them. He acknowledges that, meeting with FERGUSSON's Scottish Poems, he "strung his lyre anew with emulating vigour." But still he exceeds in versatility of talent. The poems of RAMSAY and FERGUSSON are characterised by humour or pathos only: but our poet, while his humour was more exuberant than theirs, and his pathos equally touching, rose superior by flights of the sublime and terrible, which they never attained. He may therefore be believed when he says, that "although he had these poets frequently in his eye, it was rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than to servile imitation." Nothing, indeed, of the latter appears in his works.—The poet displays the same independent spirit as the man. The plan or first thought of the *Brigs of Ayr* may have been taken from FERGUSSON's *Causeway* and *Plainstones*; and *The Farmer's Ingle* of this poet, may have suggested *The Cotter's Saturday Night*: but in these

and a few other instances, where some distant resemblance of subject may be traced, the execution, and all that constitutes the merit of the poem, belong to BURNS. It may be observed, too, that BURNS was in a progressive state of improvement: his early productions have much ruggedness and incorrectness; but as he advanced, his powers ripened, his judgment became severe and critical; and it is impossible to say what grander displays he might have made, had he been placed in better circumstances than those which have been detailed.

BURNS was entirely the poet of nature.—Of literature, he had none. He knew the Greek and Roman poets, if he knew them at all, only in translations. There have been, indeed, few poets less indebted to art and education. He was a total stranger to the tinsel, the overloading epithets, and other shifts of modern poets. If he read French, he imbibed nothing of the French manner: but his knowledge of that language does not appear to have been very intimate, although some commonplace phrases occur in his letters. What superior culture might have done for a mind naturally vigorous and easily susceptible of knowledge, we shall not now inquire. Conjecture has been but idly employed in calculating what SHAKSPEARE might

have produced, had he earned the honours of academic education. Of this we are certain, that men of ardent imaginations, and whose works bear the undoubted stamp of genius, have frequently been found to neglect, if not to despise the opportunities by which general knowledge is diffused throughout a nation, and by which studies are regulated and forms prescribed.

In the case of BURNS, however, it does not appear necessary to put our imaginations to the stretch. His works claim no charitable allowance on account of the obscurity of his birth, or the smallness of his acquisitions; they are such as few scholars could have produced, and such as learning could not have materially improved. It has been necessary to relate his personal history, as an object of that curiosity which the admirers of an author cannot repress, and in order to account for his personal failings: but as a poet, he may await the verdict of criticism, without the least necessity of putting in the plea of poverty, or want of literature. In all his works, he discovers his feelings, without betraying his situation. Had they been sent into the world without a name, conjecture would have found no pretence to fix

them on a ploughman, or to suppose that they were published merely to raise pity and relief.

By some it has been regretted, that the best performances of our poet are in a language now accounted barbarous, which is never used in serious writing, and which is gradually falling into disuse, because every man gets rid of it as soon as he can. It has been asked, why he should write only for a part of the island, when he could command the admiration of the whole? In answer, it has been urged, that he wrote for the peasantry of his country, in a language which was to them familiar, and rich in expression. It was likewise for many years the only language he knew so well as to be able to express himself fluently in it; his early thoughts were conveyed in it, and it was endeared to him by the pleasures of memory and association. He wrote it when he had no very extensive ambition, and when he had no suspicion that it would obscure his sentiments, or narrow his fame. Nor, it must be confessed, has he been disappointed in his expectations, if we suppose that they were more enlarged. In England, Ireland, and America, his poems have been read and studied with pleasure and avidity, amidst all the interruptions of glossarial reference. These remarks, however, do not apply

to many of his graver poems which are written in English, and in English which proves that he had cultivated that language with attention and success; although he did not conceive it to be adapted to such pieces as he intended, perhaps exclusively, for the use of his humble neighbours, and to give classic dignity to his native scenery.

It has already been mentioned, that BURNS had received a religious education, such as is common to the lower classes in Scotland; and it may be observed, that many of his sentiments run in a devotional strain, while he frequently, but not always with equal judgment, introduces the language and imagery of the Holy Scriptures in his writings. It is to be lamented, however, that the religious impressions of his youth were neither so strong nor so durable as to afford him consolation amidst the untoward events of his life. He appears to have been much affected by the bigotry of his neighbours, and has satirized it with peculiar humour; but in this discharge of what he might think was his duty, he overlooked the mean betwixt superstition and unbelief. In his latter days he felt severely the folly of thus removing from one extreme to another; and probably lamented the loss of that happier

frame of mind in which he wrote the concluding verses of the *Cotter's Saturday Night.* Let us hope, however, that his many and frank acknowledgments of error finally ended in that "repentance which is not to be repented of." It is but justice to add, that he corrected certain improprieties introduced into his early poems; and it was his intention to have revised all his works, and make reparation to the individuals he had been supposed to irritate, or to the subjects he had treated with unbecoming levity. "When we reflect," says Mr. MACKENZIE, "on his rank in life, the habits to which he must have been subject, and the society in which he must have mixed, we regret, perhaps, more than wonder, that delicacy should be so often offended in perusing a volume in which there is so much to interest and please us."

The character of BURNS will still be incomplete, without some notice of his abilities as a prose-writer; for of these we have ample proofs in his familiar correspondence. That his letters were never intended for the public eye, that many of them are mutilated, and that some, perhaps, might have been suppressed, are deductions which do not affect their merit as the effusions of a very uncom-

mon mind, enriched with knowledge far beyond what could have been reasonably expected in his situation. He appears to have cultivated English prose with care, and certainly wrote it with a sprightly fluency. His turns of expression are various and surprizing, and, when treating the most common topics, his sentiments are singular and animated. His letters, however, would have attained a higher portion of graceful expression, and would have been more generally pleasing, had they not been too frequently the faithful transcripts of a disappointed mind, gloomily bent on one set of indignant and querulous reflections. But with this, and another exception which might be made to these letters, from a frequent imitation of the discursive manner of STERNE, they must ever be considered as decided proofs of genius. They contain many admirable specimens of critical acumen, and many flights of humour, and observations on life and manners, which fully justify our belief that, had he cultivated his prose talents only, he might have risen to very high distinction in epistolary or essay writing. In them, likewise, we find many moral sentiments and resolutions, many struggles with his passions, fair hopes of amendment, and philosophic intrepidity, expressed in a style peculiarly original and energetic. Upon the whole,

BURNS was a man who undoubtedly possessed great abilities with great failings. The former he received from nature, he prized them highly, and he improved them; the latter were exaggerated by circumstances less within his controul, and by disappointments which, trusting to the most liberal encouragement ever offered to genius, he could not have foreseen. They have been detailed in this sketch of his life, from motives for which no apology is necessary; to guard ambitious and ardent minds from similar irregularities and wanderings, and to explain why such a man, after the first burst of popular applause was past, lived and died more unhappily than would probably have been the case had he never known what it was to be caressed and admired.

A. C.

ON THE DEATH OF BURNS.

BY MR. ROSCOE.

REAR high thy bleak majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread,
And SCOTIA, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red;
But, ah! what poet now shall tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he the sweetest bard is dead
That ever breath'd the soothing strain?

As green thy towering pines may grow,
As clear thy streams may speed along,
As bright thy summer suns may glow,
And wake again thy feathery throng;
But now, unheeded is the song,
And dull and lifeless all around,
For his wild harp lies all unstrung,
And cold the hand that wak'd its sound.

What tho' thy vigorous offspring rise ;
In arts, in arms, thy sons excel ;
Tho' beauty in thy daughters' eyes,
And health in every feature dwell ;
Yet who shall now their praises tell,
In strains impassion'd, fond and free,
Since he no more the song shall swell
To love, and liberty, and thee ?

With step-dame eye and frown severe
His hapless youth why didst thou view ?
For all thy joys to him were dear,
And all his vows to thee were due :
Nor greater bliss his bosom knew,
In opening youth's delightful prime,
Than when thy favouring ear he drew
To listen to his chaunted rhyme.

Thy lonely wastes and frowning skies
To him were all with rapture fraught ;
He heard with joy the tempest rise
That wak'd him to sublimer thought ;
And oft thy winding dells he sought,
Where wild flowers pour'd their rathe perfume
And with sincere devotion brought
To thee the summer's earliest bloom.

But, ah! no fond maternal smile
His unprotected youth enjoy'd;
His limbs inur'd to early toil,
His days with early hardships tried:
And more to mark the gloomy void,
And bid him feel his misery,
Before his infant eyes would glide
Day-dreams of immortality.

Yet, not by cold neglect depress'd,
With sinewy arm he turn'd the soil,
Sunk with the evening sun to rest,
And met at morn his earliest smile.
Wak'd by his rustic pipe, meanwhile
The powers of fancy came along,
And sooth'd his lengthen'd hour of toil
With native wit and sprightly song.

—Ah! days of bliss, too swiftly fled,
When vigorous health from labour springs,
And bland contentment smooths the bed,
And sleep his ready opiate brings;
And hovering round on airy wings
Float the light forms of young desire,
That of unutterable things
The soft and shadowy hope inspire.

Now spells of mightier power prepare,
Bid brighter phantoms round him dance;
Let flattery spread her viewless snare,
And fame attract his vagrant glance:
Let sprightly pleasure too advance,
Unveil'd her eyes, unclasp'd her zone,
'Till lost in love's delirious trance
He scorn the joys his youth has known.

Let friendship pour her brightest blaze,
Expanding all the bloom of soul;
And mirth concenter all her rays,
And point them from the sparkling bowl;
And let the careless moments roll
In social pleasures unconfin'd,
And confidence that spurns controul,
Unlock the inmost springs of mind.

And lead his steps those bowers among,
Where elegance with splendour vies,
Or science bids her favour'd throng
To more refin'd sensations rise:
Beyond the peasant's humbler joys,
And freed from each laborious strife,
There let him learn the bliss to prize
That waits the sons of polish'd life.

Then whilst his throbbing veins beat high
With every impulse of delight,
Dash from his lips the cup of joy,
And shroud the scene in shades of night;
And let despair, with wizard light,
Disclose the yawning gulf below,
And pour incessant on his sight
Her specter'd ills and shapes of woe:

And shew beneath a cheerless shed,
With sorrowing heart and streaming eyes,
In silent grief where droops her head,
The partner of his early joys;
And let his infants' tender cries
His fond parental succour claim,
And bid him hear in agonies
A husband, and a father's name.

'Tis done, the powerful charm succeeds;
His high reluctant spirit bends;
In bitterness of soul he bleeds,
Nor longer with his fate contends.
An ideot laugh thé welkin rends
As genius thus degraded lies;
Till pitying Heaven the veil extends
That shrouds the Poet's ardent eyes.

—Rear high thy bleak majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread,
And SCOTIA, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red;
But never more shall poet tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he the sweetest bard is dead
That ever breath'd the soothing strain.

POEMS,

FORMERLY PUBLISHED;

WITH SOME ADDITIONS.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION OF

BURNS' POEMS,

PUBLISHED AT KILMARNOCK.

THE following Trifles are not the production of the poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are, at least in their original language, *A fountain shut up, and a book sealed.* Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least, from the earliest

impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that '*Humility* has depressed many a genius to 'a hermit, but never raised one to fame!' If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possest of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares, that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship, for gratifying

him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom - to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but, if after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

DEDICATION

OF THE

SECOND EDITION OF THE

POEMS FORMERLY PRINTED.

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN

OF THE

CALEDONIAN HUNT.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

A Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his Country's service, where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native Land; those

who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their Ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the PLOUGH; *and threw her inspiring* mantle *over me. She bad me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue: I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired.—She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my Songs under your honoured protection: I now obey her dictates.*

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this Address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a

continuation of those favours: I was bred to the Plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious Countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my Country, that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the Great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the Echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your Forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party; and may Social Joy await your return: When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest con-

sciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native Seats; and may Domestic Happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance; and may tyranny in the Ruler, and licentiousness in the People, equally find you an inexorable foe!

I have the honour to be,

With the sincerest gratitude,

and highest respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most devoted humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH,
April 4, 1787.

POEMS,

CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

THE TWA DOGS,

A TALE.

'TWAS in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' *Auld King Coil,*
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him *Cæsar,*
Was keepit for his Honor's pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for Cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride na pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin,
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gypsey's messin.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had *Luath* ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang *,
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithful tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Ay gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his towzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit,
Whyles mice an' moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the *lords o' the creation.*

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest *Luath*,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our Laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents:
He rises when he likes himsel;
His flunkies answer at the bell:
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonnie silken purse,
As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks.
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;

An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,
Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sicklike trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our Whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than ony tenant man
His Honour has in a' the lan':
An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't enough;
A cottar howkin in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sicklike,
Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger;
But, how it comes, I never ken'd yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented;

An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit!
L——d, man our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor folk,
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd, on our Laird's court-day,
An' mony a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash:
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches?

LUATH.

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think;
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink:
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided;
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives;
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:
They'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' ferlie at the folk in *Lon'on*.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,
When *rural life*, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth,
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty winds;

The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin pipe, an' sneeshin mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,
The young anes rantin thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd.
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle Master,
Wha' aiblins, thrang a parliamentin,
For Britain's guid his saul indentin—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as *Premiers* lead him,
An' saying *aye* or *no*'s they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading:

Or may be, in a frolic daft,
To *Hague* or *Calais* takes a waft,
To make a tour, an' tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton* an' see the worl'.

There, at *Vienna* or *Versailles*,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by *Madrid* he takes the rout,
To thrum guitars, and fetch wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Wh-re-hunting among groves o' myrtles:
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last!

O would they stay aback frae courts,
An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!

For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breakin o' their timmer,
Or speakin lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master *Cæsar*,
Sure great folks life's a life o' pleasure?
Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer them,
The vera thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.
It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An' fill auld age wi' grips an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They make enow themsels to vex them;
An' ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.
A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acres till'd he's right enough;

A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'ndown want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless;
An' even their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloping thro' public places.
There's sic parade, sic pomp, an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches;
Ae night they're mad wi' drink an' wh-ring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.
The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
Whyles, o'er the wee bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exception, man an' woman;
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloaming brought the night:
The bum-clock hummi'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan;
When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na *men* but *dogs;*
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

SCOTCH DRINK.

Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That's prest wi' grief an' care;
There let him bouse, an' deep carouse,
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his *loves* or *debts*,
An' minds his griefs no more.
Solomon's Proverbs, xxxi. 6, 7.

LET other Poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drunken *Bacchus*,
An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice *Scots bear* can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O thou, my *Muse!* guid auld *Scotch Drink:*
Whether thro' wimpling worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp and wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn,
An' Aits set up their awnie horn,
An' Pease and Beans at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, *John Barleycorn*,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o'food!
Or tumblin in the boiling flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin;
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin,
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin;
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin,
Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labor sair,
At's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy siller weed,
Wi' Gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine,
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin on a New-year morning
In cog or bicker,
An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
An' gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare! to see thee fizz an freath
I' th' lugget caup!
Then *Burnewin** comes on like death
At ev'ry chaup.

* *Burnewin—burn-the-wind*—the Blacksmith—an appropriate title. E.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block an' studdie ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin cuifs their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the *barley-bree*
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
But monie daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that *brandy*, burning trash!
Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, drunken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel!
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' *whisky punch*
Wi' honest men.

O *Whisky!* soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a Bardie's humble thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes——they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's a—s!

Thee, *Ferintosh !* O sadly lost !
Scotland lament frae coast to coast !
Now colic grips, an' barkin hoast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
Is ta'en awa !

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the *Whisky stells* their prize !
Haud up thy han', Deil ! ance, twice, thrice !
There, seize the blinkers !
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune ! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' *Whisky gill*,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak' a' the rest,
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S

EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER

TO THE

SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Dearest of Distillation! last and best! ——
—— How art thou lost! ———
Parody on Milton.

YE Irish Lords, ye Knights an' Squires,
Wha *represent* our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In parliament,
To you a simple Poet's prayers
Are humbly sent.

* This was written before the act anent the Scotch Distil of session 1786; for which Scotland and the Author return most grateful thanks.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your Honors heart wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sittin on her a—
Low i' the dust,
An' scriechin out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' *me*'s in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On *Aquavitæ;*
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an' tell yon *Premier Youth,*
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble:
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble!

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom?
Speak out, an' never fash your thumb!
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em:
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack;
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle;
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle:
An' d—mn'd Excisemen in a bussle,
Seizin a *Stell*,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard Smuggler right behint her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie Vintner,
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' *Scot*,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld Mither's *pot*
Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode i' the mire out o' sight!
But could I like *Montgomerics* fight,
Or gab like *Boswell*,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
An' tie some hose well.

God bless your Honors, can ye see't,
The kind, auld, cantie Carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' gar them hear it,
An'-tell them wi' a patript heat,
Ye winna bear it!

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period, an' pause,
An' wi' rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues;
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran;
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste *Kilkerran* *;
An' that glib-gabbet Highland Baron,
The Laird o' *Graham* †;
An' ane, a chap that's d—mn'd auldfarran,
Dundas his name.

* Sir Adam Ferguson. E. † The present Duke of Montrose. E.

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
True *Campbells*, *Frederick* an' *Ilay*;
An' *Livingstone*, the bauld *Sir Willie*;
An' monie ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her *kettle*;
Or faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see't, or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reekin whittle,
Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her *lost Militia* fir'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that pliskie!)
An' now she's like to rin red-wud
About her Whisky.

An' L—d, if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' durk an' pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' th' first she meets!

For G-d sake, Sirs! then speak her fair,
An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle house repair,
Wi' instant speed,
An' strive, wi' a' your Wit and Lear,
To get remead.

Yon ill-tongu'd tinkler, *Charlie Fox*,
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
But gie him't het, my hearty cocks!
E'en cowe the caddie!
An' send him to his dicing box
An' sportin lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld *Boconnock's*
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,
An' drink his health in auld *Nanse Tinnock's* *
Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some *commutation* broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The *Coalition*.

* A worthy old Hostess of the Author's in *Mauchline*, where he sometimes studies Politics over a glass of gude auld *Scotch Drink*.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She's just a devil wi' a rung;
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

An' now, ye chosen *Five-and-Forty*,
May still your Mither's heart support ye;
Then, though a Minister grow dorty,
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your Honors a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail and brats o' claise,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes,
That haunt St. *Jamie's!*
Your humble Poet sings an' prays
While *Rab* his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

LET half-starv'd slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clust'ring, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blythe and frisky,
She eyes her freeborn, martial boys
Tak aff their Whisky.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonor arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' powther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp—a shot—they're aff, a' throwther,
To save their skin.

But bring a *Scotsman* frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal *George's* will,
An' there's the foe,
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gies him;
An' when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin lea'es him
In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek,
An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek,
In clime and season;
But tell me *Whisky's* name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected Mither!
Tho' whiles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam;
Freedom and *Whisky* gang thegither!
Tak aff your dram!

*THE HOLY FAIR**.

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty Observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in *Religion*.
Hypocrisy a-la-mode.

I.

UPON a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the caller air.
The rising sun owre *Galston* muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin;
The hares were hirplin down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin
Fu' sweet that day.

* *Holy Fair* is a common phrase in the West of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.

II.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad.
To see a scene sae gay,
Three Hizzies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third, that gaed a-wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining,
Fu' gay that day.

III.

The *twa* appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form an' claes!
Their visage, wither'd, lang an' thin,
An' sour as ony slaes:
The *third* cam up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

IV.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, 'Sweet lass,
'I think ye seem to ken me;
'I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
'But yet I canna name ye.'

Quo' she, an' laughin as she spak,
An' taks me by the hands,
'Ye, for my sake, hae gi'en the feck
'Of a' the ten commands
'A screed some day.

V.

'My name is *Fun*—your cronie dear,
'The nearest friend ye hae;
'An' this is *Superstition* here,
'An' that's *Hypocrisy*.
'I'm gaun to ********* *Holy Fair*,
'To spend an hour in daffin:
'Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl'd pair,
'We will get famous laughin
'At them this day.'

VI.

Quoth I, 'With a' my heart, I'll do't;
'I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
'An' meet you on the holy spot;
'Faith we'se hae fine remarkin!'
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time
An' soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' monie a wearie body,
In droves that day.

VII.

Here farmers gash, in ridin graith
Gaed hoddin by their cotters;
There, swankies young, in braw braid-claith
Are springin o'er the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang,
In silks an' scarlets glitter;
Wi' *sweet-milk cheese*, in monie a whang,
An' *farls* bak'd wi' butter
Fu' crump that day.

VIII.

When by the *plate* we set our nose,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glowr Black Bonnet throws,
An' we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they're gathrin,
Some carrying dales, some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy blethrin
Right loud that day.

IX.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
An' screen our countra Gentry,
There, *racer Jess*, an' twa-three wh—res,
Are blinkin at the entry.

Here sits a raw of tittlin jades,
Wi' heaving breast and bare neck,
An' there a batch o wabster lads,
Blackguarding frae K————ck
For *fun* this day.

X.

Here some are thinkin on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
Wi' screw'd up grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin on the lasses
To chairs that day.

XI.

O happy is that man an' blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Wha's ain dear lass, that he likes best,
Comes clinkin down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof upon her bosom
Unkend that day.

XII.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation;
For ****** speels the holy door,
Wi tidings o' d-mn-t—n.
Should *Hornie*, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' G— present him,
The vera sight o' *****'s face,
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

XIII.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin an' thumpin!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin an' he's jumpin!
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch squeel and gestures,
O how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day!

XIV.

But, hark! the *tent* has chang'd its voice;
There's peace an' rest nae langer:
For a' the *real judges* rise,
They canna sit for anger.

***** opens out his cauld harangues,
On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day.

XV.

What signifies his barren shine,
Of moral pow'rs and reason?
His English style, an' gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like *Socrates* or *Antonine*,
Or some auld pagan Heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

XVI.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For *******, frae the water-fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' G—,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While *Common-Sense* has ta'en the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate*,
Fast, fast, that day.

* A street so called, which faces the *tent* in ———.

XVII.

Wee ******, niest, the Guard relieves,
An' Orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But, faith the birkie wants a Manse,
So, cannily he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

XVIII.

Now butt an' ben, the Change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup Commentators:
Here's crying out for bakes and gills,
An' there the pint stowp clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' Logic, an' wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

XIX.

Leeze me on Drink! it gies us mair
Than either School or College:
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.

Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

XX.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're making observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
An' formin assignations
To meet some day.

XXI.

But now the L—d's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin,
An' echoes back return the shouts:
Black ****** is na spairin:
His piercing words, like Highlan swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' H-ll, where devils dwell,
Our vera sauls does harrow *
Wi' fright that day.

* Shakespeare's Hamlet.

XXII.

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fou o' lowin brunstane,
Wha's ragin flame, an' scorchin heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin,
When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neebor snorin
Asleep that day.

XXIII.

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
How monie stories past,
An' how they crouded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,
Amang the furms an' benches;
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
An' dawds that day.

XXIV.

In comes a gaucie, gash Guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife,
The lasses they are shyer.

The auld Guidmen, about the *grace*,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gi'es them't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

XXV.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithing!
O wives, be mindfu', ance yoursel,
How bonie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

XXVI.

Now *Clinkumbell*, wi' rattlin tow,
Begins to jow an' croon;
Some swagger home, the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith and hope, an' love an' drink,
They're a' in famous tune,
For crack that day.

XXVII.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane gin night are gane,
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin,
May end in Houghmagandie
Some ither day.

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK.

A TRUE STORY.

SOME books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n Ministers they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times, to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befel,
Is just as true's the Deil's in h—ll
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel
'S a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,
I was na fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes, kenn'd ay
Frae ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glowr
The distant *Cumnock* hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I cou'd na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on *Willie's mill*,
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' *Something* did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-tae'd leister on the ither
Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp an' sma'
As cheeks o' branks.

'Guid-een,' quo' I; 'Friend! hae ye been mawin,
'When ither folk are busy sawin*?'
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak;
At length, says I, 'Friend, whare ye gaun,
'Will ye go back?'

It spak right howe,—'My name is *Death*,
'But be na' fley'd.'—Quoth I, 'Guid faith,
'Ye're may be come to stap my breath;
'But tent me billie;
'I red ye weel, tak care o' skaith,
'See there's a gully!'

'Gudeman,' quo' he, 'put up your whittle,
'I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
'But if I did, I wad be kittle
'To be mislear'd,
'I wad na mind it, no that spittle
'Out-owre my beard.'

* This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785.

'Weel, weel!' says I, 'a bargain be't;
'Come, gies your hand, an' sae we're gree't;
'We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat,
'Come, gies your news;
'This while* ye hae been mony a gate
'At mony a house.'

'Ay, ay! quo' he, an' shook his head,
'It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
'Sin I began to nick the thread,
'An' choke the breath:
'Folk maun do something for their bread,
'An' sae maun *Death*.

'Sax thousand years are near hand fled
'Sin' I was to the butching bred,
'An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
'To stap or scar me;
'Till ane *Hornbook*'s† ta'en up the trade,
'An' faith, he'll waur me.

* An epidemical fever was then raging in that country.

† This gentleman, Dr. *Hornbook*, is, professionally, a brothe
the sovereign Order of the Ferula; but, by intuition and i
ration, is at once an Apothecary, Surgeon, and Physician.

'Ye ken *Jock Hornbook* i' the Clachan,
'Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!
'He's grown sae well acquaint wi' *Buchan**
'An' ither chaps,
'The weans haud out their fingers laughin
'And pouk my hips.

'See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
'They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart;
'But Doctor *Hornbook*, wi' his art
'And cursed skill,
'Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
'Damn'd haet they'll kill.

'Twas but yestreen, nae farther gaen,
'I threw a noble throw at ane;
'Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundred's slain;
'But deil-ma-care,
'It just play'd dirl on the bane,
'But did nae mair.

'*Hornbook* was by, wi' ready art,
'And had sae fortify'd the part,
'That when I looked to my dart,
'It was sae blunt,
'Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
'Of a kail-runt.

* Buchan's Domestic Medicine.

'I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
'I nearhand cowpit wi' my hurry,
'But yet the bauld *Apothecary*
'Withstood the shock;
'I might as weel hae try'd a quarry
'O' hard whin rock.

'Ev'n them he canna get attended,
'Altho' their face he ne'er had kend it,
'Just ——— in a kail-blade, and send it,
'As soon he smells't,
'Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
'At once he tells't.

'And then a doctor's-saws and whittles,
'Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
'A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
'He's sure to hae;
'Their Latin names as fast he rattles
'As A B C.

'Calces o' fossils, earth, and trees;
'True Sal-marinum o' the seas;
'The Farina of beans and pease,
'He has't in plenty;
'Aqua-fontis, what you please,
'He can content ye.

'Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
'Urinus Spiritus of capons;
'Or Mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
'Distill'd *per se;*
'Sal-alkali o' Midge-tail-clippings,
'And mony mae.'

'Waes me for *Johnny Ged's Hole** now,'
Quo' I, 'If that the news be true!
'His braw calf-ward whare gowans grew,
'Sae white and bonie,
'Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew;
'They'll ruin *Johnie!*'

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says, 'Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
'Kirkyards will soon be till'd eneugh,
'Tak ye nae fear:
'They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
'In twa-three year.

'Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae death,
'By loss o' blood or want of breath,
'This night I'm free to tak my aith,
'That *Hornbook*'s skill
'Has clad a score i' their last claith,
'By drap an' pill.

* The grave-digger.

'An honest Wabster to his trade,
'Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel bred,
'Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
'When it was sair;
'The wife slade cannie to her bed,
'But ne'er spak mair.

'A countra Laird had ta'en the batts,
'Or some curmurring in his guts,
'His only son for *Hornbook* sets,
'An' pays him well.
'The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,
'Was laird himsel.

'A bonie lass, ye kend her name,
'Some ill-brewn drink had hov'd her wame;
'She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
'In *Hornbook*'s care;
'*Horn* sent her aff to her long hame,
'To hide it there.

'That's just a swatch o' *Hornbook*'s way;
'Thus goes he on from day to day,
'Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
'An's weel paid for't;
'Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
'Wi' his d-mn'd dirt:

'But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
'Tho' dinna ye be speaking o't;
'I'll nail the self-conceited Sot,
'As dead's a herrin:
'Niest time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
'He gets his fairin!'

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the *twal*,
Which rais'd us baith:
I took the way that pleas'd mysel,
And sae did *Death*.

THE BRIGS OF AYR.

A POEM,

Inscribed to J. B**********, Esq. Ayr.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
Or deep-ton'd plovers, grey, wild-whistling o'er the hill;
Shall he, nurst in the Peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy Independence bravely bred,
By early Poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field,
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose?

No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward.
Still, if some Patron's gen'rous care he trace,
Skill'd in the secret, to bestow with grace;
When B********* befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells,
The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

. . . . . .

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap,
And thack and rape secure the toil-worn crap;
Potatoe-bings are snugged up fra skaith
Of coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
Unnumber'd buds an' flow'rs' delicious spoils,
Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
The death o' devils smoor'd wi' brimstone reek:
The thundering guns are heard on ev'ry side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
(What warm, poetic heart but inly bleeds,
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)

Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs;
Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
Except perhaps the Robin's whistling glee,
Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree:
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide-spreads the noon-tide blaze,
While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.
'Twas in that season, when a simple bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
Ae night, within the ancient brugh of *Ayr*,
By whom inspir'd, or haply prest wi' care,
He left his bed, and took his wayward rout,
And down by *Simpson's* * wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out he knew not where nor why:)
The drowsy *Dungeon-clock* † had number'd two,
And *Wallace Tow'r* † had sworn the fact was true:
The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore:
All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e;
The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree:
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.

* A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.

† The two steeples.

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
The clanging sugh of whistling wings is heard;
Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air.
Swift as the *Gos* * drives on the wheeling air,
Ane on th' *Auld Brig* his airy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the *rising piers*:
Our warlock Rhymer instantly descry'd
The Sprites that owre the *Brigs of Ayr* preside.
(That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk;
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them.)
Auld Brig appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
The very wrinkles Gothic in his face:
He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,
Yet teughly doure, he bade an unco bang.
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
That he, at *Lon'on*, frae ane *Adams*, got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
Wi' virls and whirlygigums at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch;
It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his e'e,
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guideen:—

* The gos-hawk, or falcon.

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, frien', ye'll think y'ere nae sheep-shank,
Ance ye were streekit o'er frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
Tho' faith that day, I doubt, ye'll never see;
There'll be, if that date come, I'll wad a boddle,
Some fewer whigmeleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruin'd, formless bulk, o' stane an' lime,
Compare wi' bonie *Brigs* o' modern time?
There's men o' taste wou'd tak the *Ducat-stream* *,
Tho' they should cast the vera sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
Of sic an ugly, Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
This mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
I'll be a *Brig*, when ye're a shapeless cairn!

* A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.

As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling *Coil*,
Or stately *Lugar*'s mossy fountains boil,
Or where the *Greenock* winds his moorland course,
Or haunted *Garpal* * draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds an spotting thowes,
In mony a torrent down his sna-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spleat,
Sweep dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
And from *Glenbuck* †, down to the *Ratton-key* ‡,
Auld *Ayr* is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine *Architecture*, trowth, I needs must say't o't!
The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!

* The banks of *Garpal Water* is one of the few places in the West of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of *Ghaists*, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.

† The source of the river Ayr.

‡ A small landing place above the large key.

Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices;
O'er arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves:
Windows and doors, in nameless sculpture drest,
With order, symmetry, or state unblest;
Forms like some bedlam Statuary's dream,
The crax'd creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the *second dread command* be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea,
Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason reptile, bird or beast;
Fit only for a doited Monkish race,
Of frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
Or Cuifs of latter times, wha held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection!
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy *Proveses*, an' mony a *Bailie*,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil ay;
Ye dainty *Deacons*, an ye douce *Conveeners*,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners;

Ye godly *Councils* wha hae blest this town;
Ye godly *Brethren* of the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gie your *hurdies* to the *smiters*;
And (what would now be strange) ye *godly Writers*:
A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
To see each melancholy alteration;
And agonizing, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base, degen'rate race!
Na langer Rev'rend Men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story!
Nae langer thrifty Citizens, an' douce,
Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house;
But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless Gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
Men, three-parts made by Taylors and by Barbers,
Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on d——d *new Brigs*
and *Harbours!*

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through,
As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,
Corbies and *Clergy* are a shot right kittle:
But, under favor o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd:

To liken them to your auld-warld squad,
I must needs say, comparisons are odd.
In *Ayr*, Wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle
To mouth 'a Citizen,' a term o' scandal:
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
Men wha grew wise priggin owre hops an' raisins,
Or gather'd lib'ral views in Bonds and Seisins.
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shor'd them with a glimmer of his lamp,
And would to Common-sense, for once betray'd them,
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

. . . . . .

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glittering stream they featly danc'd;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc'd:
They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet:
While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling Bards heroic ditties sung.

O had *M'Lauchlan* *, thairm-inspiring Sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When thro' his dear *Strathspeys* they bore with Highland rage,
Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd,
And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch inspir'd!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the Stream in front appears,
A venerable Chief advanc'd in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter tangle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet female beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye:
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn;
Then winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow.

* A well known performer of Scottish music on the violin.

Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride,
From where the *Feal* wild woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
A female form, came from the tow'rs of *Stair*:
Learning and Worth in equal measures rode
From simple *Catrine*, their long-lov'd abode;
Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazle wr
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instruments of death;
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kind
wrath.

THE ORDINATION.

For sense they little owe to Frugal Heav'n.—
To please the Mob they hide the little given.

I.

KILMARNOCK Wabsters fidge an' claw
An' pour your creeshie nations;
An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
Of a' denominations;
Swith to the *Laigh Kirk*, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to *B-gb--*'s in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

II.

Curst Common-sense, that imp o' h-ll,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder *;
But O******* aft made her yell,
An' R***** sair misca'd her;

* Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late Reverend and worthy Mr. L. to the Laigh Kirk.

This day M'******* takes the flail,
And he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll clap a *shangan* on her tail,
An' set the bairns to daub her
Wi' dirt this day.

III.

Mak haste an' turn king David owre,
An' lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skirl up the Bangor:
This day the kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Heresy is in her pow'r,
And gloriously she'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.

IV.

Come let a proper text be read,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless *Ham** leugh at his Dad,
Which made *Canaan* a niger;
Or *Phineas*† drove the murdering blade,
Wi' wh-re-abhorring rigour;
Or *Zipporah*‡, the scauldin jad,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' th' inn that day.

* Genesis, ch. ix. ver. 22. † Numbers, ch. xxv. ver. 8.
‡ Exodus, ch. iv. ver. 25.

V.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,
That *Stipend* is a carnal weed
He takes but for the fashion;
And gie him o'er the flock, to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Especial, *rams* that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin,
Spare them na day.

VI.

Now auld *Kilmarnock* cock thy tail,
And toss thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou'lt rowte out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' *gospel kail*
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
An' *runts* o' *grace* the pick and wale,
No gi'en by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

VII.

Na mair by *Babel's streams* we'll weep,
To think upon our *Zion;*
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin:

Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms be tryin;
O, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
An' a' like lamb-tails flyin
Fu' fast this day!

VIII.

Lang *Patronage*, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin,
As lately *F-rw-ck*, sair forfairn,
Has proven to its ruin:
Our Patron, honest man! *Glencairn*,
He saw mischief was brewin;
And like a godly elect bairn,
He's wal'd us out a true ane,
And sound this day.

IX.

Now R****** harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab for ever:
Or try the wicked town of A**,
For there they'll think you clever;
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a Shaver;
Or to the *N-th-rt-n* repair,
And turn a Carpet-weaver
Aff-hand this day.

X.

M***** and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones:
Auld *Hornie* did the *Laigh Kirk* watch,
Just like a winkin baudrons:
And ay' he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons:
But now his honour maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

XI.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She's swingein thro' the city;
Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
I vow its unco pretty:
There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty;
And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to *Jamie Beattie*
Her plaint this day.

XII.

But there's Morality himsel,
Embracing all opinions;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions;

See. how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane were peelin onions!
Now there—they're packed aff to hell,
And banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

XIII.

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter!
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
M'******, R*****, are the boys,
That Heresy can torture;
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cow her measure shorter
By th' head some day.

XIV.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
And here's, for a conclusion,
To every *New Light** mother's son,
From this time forth, Confusion:
If mair they deave us with their din,
Or Patronage intrusion,
We'll light a spunk, and, ev'ry skin,
We'll rin them aff in fusion
Like oil, some day.

* *New Light* is a cant phrase, in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.

THE CALF.

To the Rev. Mr. ———

On his Text, Malachi, ch. iv. ver. 2. "And they shall go forth, "and grow up, like CALVES of the stall."

RIGHT, Sir! your text I'll prove it true,
Though Heretics may laugh;
For instance; there's yoursel just now,
God knows, an unco *Calf!*

And should some Patron be so kind,
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find,
Ye're still as great a *Stirk.*

But, if the Lover's raptur'd hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly Power,
You e'er should be a *Stot!*

Tho', when some kind, connubial Dear,
Your but-and-ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of *horns*.

And in your lug, most reverend *James*,
To hear you roar and rowte,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the *nowte*.

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
'Here lies a famous *Bullock!*'

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

Oh Prince! Oh Chief of many throned Pow'rs,
That led the embattl'd Seraphim to war—.
Milton.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges about the brustane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear mé, auld *Hangie*, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'n to a *deil*,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kend and noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirling the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend *Graunie* say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld-ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my *Graunie* summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortries comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stour, quaick—quaick—
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

Let *warlocks* grim, an' wither'd *hags*,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint *Hawkie*'s gaen
As yell's the Bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young Guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then *Water-kelpies* haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted Trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss traversing *Spunkies*
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When *Masons'* mystic *word* an' *grip*,
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell!

Lang syne, in *Eden*'s bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were paird,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry sward,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snic-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog,
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa!)
An' gied the infant warld a shod,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz,
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the *man of Uzz*
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
While scabs an' botches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd, wicked Scawl,
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day *Michael** did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wag ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld *Cloots*, I ken ye're thinkin.
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld *Nickie-ben!*
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a *stake*—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

* Vide Milton, Book VI.

THE

DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

AS *Maile*, an' her lambs thegither,
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch:
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When *Hughoc* * he cam doytin by.

Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted han's,
Poor *Hughoc* like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it!

* A neibor herd-callan.

He gaped wide, but naething spak;
At length poor *Maile* silence brak.

'O, thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My *dying words* attentive hear,
An' bear them to my Master dear.

'Tell him, if e'er again he keep,
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O, bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, an' grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo!

'Tell him, he was a Master kin',
An' ay was guid to me and mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

'O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butcher's knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel;

An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay an' rips o' corn.

'An' may they never learn the gaets
Of ither vile, wanrestfu' *pets!*
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great Forbears,
For monie a year come thro' the sheers:
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.

'My poor *toop-lamb*, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An', if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
An' warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither mensless, graceless, brutes.

'An' nicst my *yowie*, silly thing,
Gude keep the frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop;
But ay keep mind to moop an mell,
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!

'And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith:
An' when you think upo' your Mither,
Mind to be kin' to ane anither.

'Now, honest *Hughoc*, dinna fail
To tell my Master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blether.'

This said, poor *Mailie* turn'd her head,
An' clos'd her een amang the dead.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cape-stane of his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

Its no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In *Mailie* dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than *Mailie* dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense:
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' *Mailie*'s dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her *yowe*,
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For *Mailie* dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae yont the *Tweed:*
A bonier *fleesh* ne'er cross'd the clips
Than *Mailie's* dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing—*a rape!*
It maks guid fellows girn an' gape,
Wi' chokin dread;
An' *Robin's* bonnet wave wi' crape,
For *Mailie* dead.

O a' ye bards on bonie *Doon!*
An' wha on *Ayr* your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' *Robin's* reed!
His heart will never get aboon!
His *Mailie* dead.

*TO J. S****.*

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
I owe thee much.———
Blair.

DEAR S****, the sleest, paukie thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
And ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon
Just gaun to see you;
And ev'ry ither pair that's done,
Mair taen I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin, nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She's turn'd you off, a human creature
On her *first* plan,
And in her freaks, on ev'ry feature,
She's wrote, *the Man*.

Just now I've taen the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime
My fancy yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin?

Some rhyme, a neebor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
An' raise a din;
For me, an *aim* I never fash;
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has blest me wi' a random shot
O' countra wit.

This while my notion's taen a sklent,
To try my fate in guid, black *prent;*
But still the mair I'm that way bent,
Something cries, 'Hoolie!
'I red you, honest man, tak tent!
'Ye'll shaw your folly.

'There's ither poets, much your betters,
'Far seen in *Greek*, deep men o' letters,
'Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors,
'A' future ages;
'Now moths deform in shapeless tetters,
'Their unknown pages.'

Then farewel hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
An' teach the lanely heights an' howes
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, with tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound and hale,
Then top and maintop croud the sail,
Heave *care* o'er side!
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic-wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See crazy, weary, joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Comes hostin, hirplin owre the field,
Wi' creepin pace.

When ance *life's day* draws near the gloamin,
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin;
An' fareweel chearfu' tankards foamin,
An' social noise;
An' fareweel dear, deluding *woman*,
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some fortune chase;
Keen hope does ev'ry sinew brace;
Thro fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey:
Then canie, in some cozie place,
They close the *day*.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin;
To right or left, eternal swervin,
They zig-zag on;
'Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin,
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is fortune's fickle *Luna* waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, 'Ye Pow'rs!' and warm implore,
'Tho' I should wander *terra* o'er,
'In all her climes,
'Grant me but this, I ask no more,
'Ay rowth o' rhymes.

'Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,
'Till icicles hing frae their beards;
'Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
'And maids of honour;
'And yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
'Until they sconner.

'A title, *Dempster* merits it;
'A *garter* gie to *Willie Pitt;*
'Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
'In cent. per cent.
'But give me real, sterling wit,
'And I'm content.

'While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
'I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
'Be't *water-brose*, or *muslin-kail*,
'Wi' chearfu' face,
'As lang's the muses dinna fail
'To say the grace.'

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In *arioso* trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But *gravissimo*, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae *grave*, nae doubt ye're *wise*;
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattlin squad:
I see you upward cast your eyes—
—Ye ken the road.—

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
Wi' you I'll scarce gang *ony where*—
Then, *Jamie*, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content wi' *You* to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.

A DREAM.

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason;
But surely *dreams* were ne'er indicted treason.

[On reading, in the public papers, the *Laureat's Ode*, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the birth-day levee; and, in his dreaming fancy, made the following *Address*.]

I.

GUID-MORNIN to your *Majesty!*
May heav'n augment your blisses,
On ev'ry new *birth-day* ye see,
A humble poet wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

II.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By mony a lord and lady;
'God save the king!' 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said ay;
The *poets*, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.

III.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n *there* I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So, nae reflection on *your grace*,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's monie waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

IV.

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are cheels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:

Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
An' less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

V.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But, faith! I muckle doubt, my *Sire*,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts yon day.

VI.

And now ye've gien auld *Britain* peace,
Her broken shins to plaister;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester;
For me, thank God, my life 's a *lease*,
Nae *bargain* wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that, wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

VII.

I'm no mistrusting *Willie Pitt*,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An *Will*'s a true guid fallow's get,
A name not envy spairges,)
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, G-d-sake! let na *saving-fit*
Abridge your bonie barges
An' boats this day.

VIII.

Adieu, my *Liege!* may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your *Queen*, with due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great birth-day.

IX.

Hail, *Majesty Most Excellent!*
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet gies ye?

Thae bonie bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

X.

For you, young potentate o' W——,
I tell your *Highness* fairly,
Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak *Diana*'s pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' *Charlie*,
By night or day.

XI.

Yet aft a ragged *cowte*'s been known
To mak a noble *aiver;*
So ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, him* at *Agincourt* wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer *Sir John*†,
He was an unco shaver
For monie a day.

* King Henry V. † Sir John Falstaff; *vide* Shakspeare.

XII.

For you, right rev'rend O————,
Nane sets the *lawn-sleeve* sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

XIII.

Young, royal *Tarry Breeks*, I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her;
A glorious *galley* *, stem an' stern,
Weel rigg'd for *Venus'* barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern,
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
An', large upo' her quarter,
Come full that day.

XIV.

Ye, lastly, bonie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a-plenty:

* Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour.

But sneer na *British boys* awa',
For kings are unco scant ay;
An' German gentles are but *sma'*,
They're better just than *want ay*
On onie day.

XV.

God bless you a'! consider now,
Your unco muckle dautet;
But ere the *course* o' life be through,
It may be bitter sautet:
An' I hae seen their *coggie* fou,
That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the *day* was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautet
Fu' clean that day.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST *.

THE sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play
An' hunger'd maukin taen her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Where she has been.

The thresher's weary *flingin-tree*
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And whan the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the *spence*, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

* *Duan*, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his *Cath-Loda*, vol. ii. of M'Pherson's translation.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin;
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done nae-thing,
But stringin blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank an' clarkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, blackhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be *rhyme-proof*
Till my last breath—

When click! the string the snick did draw:
And jee! the door gaed to the wa';
An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin bright,
A tight, outlandish *Hizzie*, braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
And stepped ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad *holly-boughs*
Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows,
I took her for some *Scottish Muse*,
By that same token;
An' come to stop those reckless vows,
Wou'd soon been broken.

A 'hair-brain'd, sentimental trace'
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beem'd keen with honor.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
'Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonie *Jean*
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,
Nane else came near it.

Her *mantle* large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep *lights* and *shades*, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd to my astonish'd view,
A *well known* land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were tost:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, *Doon* pour'd down his far-fetched floods;
There, well-fed *Irwine* stately thuds:
Auld hermit *Ayr* staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient *borough* rear'd her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race,
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race* heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their suthron foes.

His COUNTRY'S SAVIOUR**, mark him well
Bold *Richardton's*†, heroic swell;
The chief on *Sark*‡ who glorious fell,
In high command;
And *he* whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

* The Wallaces. ** William Wallace.

There, where a sceptr'd *Pictish* shade §
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove *,
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love,
In musing mood)
An *aged Judge*, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

† Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.

‡ Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought *anno* 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.

§ Coilus, king of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family-seat of the Montgomeries of Coil's-field, where his burial-place is still shown.

* Barskimming, the seat of the Lord Justice-Clerk.

With deep-struck reverential awe *
The learned *sire* and *son* I saw,
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydone's brave ward † I well could spy,
Beneath old *Scotia*'s smiling eye;
Who call'd on fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high
And hero shone.

* Catrine, the seat of the late doctor, and present profess Stewart.

† Colonel Fullarton.

DUAN SECOND.

WITH musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heav'nly-seeming *fair;*
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

'All hail! my own inspired bard!
'In me thy native muse regard!
'Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
'Thus poorly low!
'I come to give thee such reward
'As we bestow.

'Know the great *genius* of this land
'Has many a light, aerial band,
'Who, all beneath his high command,
'Harmoniously,
'As arts or arms they understand,
'Their labours ply.

'They *Scotia*'s race among them share;
'Some fire the soldier on to dare;
'Some rouse the patriot up to bare
'Corruption's heart:
'Some teach the bard, a darling care,
'The tuneful art.

'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They ardent, kindling spirits pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

Hence *Fullarton*, the brave and young;
Hence *Dempster*'s zeal-inspired tongue;
Hence, sweet harmonious *Beattie* sung
His "Minstrel lays;"
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The *sceptic*'s bays.

To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of Human-kind,
The rustic Bard, the lab'ring Hind,
The Artisan;
All chuse, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

'When yellow waves the heavy grain,
'The threat'ning storm some, strongly, rein;
'Some teach to meliorate the plain,
'With tillage-skill;
'And some instruct the shepherd-train,
'Blythe o'er the hill.

'Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
'Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
'Some soothe the lab'rer's weary toil,
'For humble gains,
'And make his cottage-scenes beguile
'His cares and pains.

'Some, bounded to a district-space,
'Explore at large man's infant race,
'To mark the embryotic trace
'Of *rustic Bard;*
'And careful note each op'ning grace,
'A guide and guard.

'*Of these am I—Coila* my name;
'And this district as mine I claim,
'Where once the *Campbells*, chiefs of fame,
'Held ruling pow'r:
'I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
'Thy natal hour.

'With future hope, I oft would gaze,
'Fond, on thy little early ways,
'Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
'In uncouth rhymes,
'Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
'Of other times.

'I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
'Delighted with the dashing roar;
'Or when the north his fleecy store
'Drove thro' the sky,
'I saw grim nature's visage hoar
'Struck thy young eye.

'Or when the deep green-mantl'd earth
'Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
'And joy and music pouring forth
'In ev'ry grove,
'I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
'With boundless love.

'When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
'Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
'I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
'And lonely stalk,
'To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
'In pensive walk.

'When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
'Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
'Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
'Th' adored *Name*,
'I taught thee how to pour in song,
'To soothe thy flame.

'I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
'Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
'Misled by fancy's meteor-ray,
'By passion driven;
'But yet the *light* that led astray
'Was *light* from heaven.

'I taught thy manners-painting strains,
'The loves, the ways of simple swains,
'Till now, o'er all my wide domains
'Thy fame extends;
'And some, the pride of *Coila*'s plains,
'Become thy friends.

'Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
'To paint with *Thomson*'s landscape-glow;
'Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
'With *Shenstone*'s art;
'Or pour, with *Gray*, the moving flow
'Warm on the heart.

'Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
'The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
'Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
'His army shade,
'Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
'Adown the glade.

'Then never murmur nor repine;
'Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
'And trust me, not *Potosi*'s mine,
'Nor kings regard,
'Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
'A *rustic Bard.*

'To give my counsels all in one,
'Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
'Preserve *the Dignity of Man,*
'With soul erect;
'And trust, the *Universal Plan*
'Will all protect.

'*And wear thou this*'—she solemn said,
And bound the *Holly* round my head:
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID,

OR THE

RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them ay thegither;
The *Rigid Righteous* is a fool,
The *Rigid Wise* anither:
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.
Solomon.—Eccles. ch. vii. *ver.* 16.

I.

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebour's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a well-gaun mill,
Supply'd with store o' water,
The heapet happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

II.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce wisdom's door
For glaikit folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

III.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

IV.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop:
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks an unco leeway.

V.

See social life and glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
'Till, quite transmugrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and drinking:
Oh, would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
D-mnation of expenses!

VI.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor *frailty* names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

VII.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang;
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

VIII.

Who made the heart, 'tis *He* alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what's *resisted.*

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.*

An honest man's the noblest work of God.
Pope.

HAS auld K********* seen the Deil?
Or great M'*******† thrawn his heel!
Or R*******‡ again grow weel,
To preach an' read?
'Na, waur than a'!' cries ilka chiel,
'*Tam Samson*'s dead!

* When this worthy old sportsman went out last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, 'the last of his fields;' and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph.

† A certain preacher, a great favourite with the million. *Vide* the Ordination, stanza II.

‡ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him, see also the Ordination, stanza IX.

K********* lang may grunt an' grane,
An' sigh, an' sab, an' greet her lane,
An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, an' wean,
In mourning weed;
To death, she's dearly paid the kane,
Tam Samson's dead!

The brethren of the mystic *level*
May hing their head in wofu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death's gien the lodge an unco devel:
Tam Samson's dead!

When winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;
When to the loughs the curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the *cock*,
Tam Samson's dead?

He was the king o' a' the core
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
Or up the rink like *Jehu* roar
In time of need;
But now he lags on death's *hog-score*,
Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel kea'd for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since dark in death's *fish-creel* we wail
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie moorcocks, crousely craw;
Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa',
Tam Samson's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd
Saw him in shootin graith adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples freed;
But, Och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
In vain the burns came down like waters,
An acre braid!
Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin, clatters,
Tam Samson's dead!

Owre many a weary hag he limpit,
An' ay the tither shot he thumpit,
'Till coward death behind him jumpit,
Wi' deadly feide;
Now he proclaims, wi' tout o' trumpet,
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
'L—d, five!' he cry'd, an' owre did stagger;
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;
Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,
Marks out his head,
Whare *Burns* has wrote, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch an' breed;
Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three vollies let his mem'ry crave
O' pouther an' lead,
'Till echo answer frae her cave,
Tam Samson 's dead !

Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be !
Is the wish o' mony mae than me ;
He had twa fauts, or may be three,
Yet what remead ?
Ae social, honest man want we :
Tam Samson 's dead !

THE EPITAPH.

TAM SAMSON'S weel-worn clay here lies,
Ye canting zealots, spare him!
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, fame, an' canter like a filly
Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' *Killie**,
Tell ev'ry social, honest billie
To cease his grievin,
For yet, unskaith'd by death's gleg gullie,
Tam Sampson's livin.

* *Killie* is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for Kilmarnock.

*HALLOWEEN**.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Goldsmith.

[*The following Poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it, among the more unenlightened in our own.*]

I.

UPON that night, when fairies light,
On *Cassilis Downans*† dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;

* Is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings, are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands; particularly those aërial people, the Fairies, are said on that night, to hold a grand anniversary.

† Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.

Or for *Colean* the rout is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the *cove* *, to stray an' rove
Amang the rocks and streams
To sport that night.

II.

Amang the bonnie, winding banks
Where *Doon* rins, wimplin, clear,
Where BRUCE† ance rul'd the martial ranks,
An' shook the *Carrick* spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,
To *burn* their nits, an' *pou* their stocks,
And haud their *Hallowe'en*
Fu' blythe that night.

III.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they're fine;
Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, an' warm, an kin':

* A noted cavern near Colean-house, called The Cove of Colean; which, as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.

† The famous family of that name, the ancestors of ROBERT, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.

The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs,
Gar lasses hearts gang startin
Whiles fast at night.

IV.

Then first and foremost, thro' the kail,
Their *stocks* * maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, an' graip an' wale,
For muckle anes an' straught anes,
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd thro' the *bow-kail*,
An' pow't, for want o' better shift,
A *runt* was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

* The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a *stock*, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: Its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any *yird*, or earth, stick to the root, that is *tocher*, or fortune; and the state of the *custoc*, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the *runts*, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the *runts*, the names in question.

V.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throu'ther;
The vera wee things, todlin, rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
An' gif the *custoc*'s sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' canni care, they've plac'd them
To lie that night.

VI.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a'
To pou their *stalks o' corn* *;
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her *tap-pickle* maist was lost,
When kiutlin in the fause-house †
Wi' him that night.

* They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the *top-pickle*, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c. makes a

VII.

The auld guidwife's weel hoordet *nits* *
Are round an' round divided,
An' monie lads and lasses fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthie, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

VIII.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is *Jock*, an' this is *me*,
She says in to hersel:
He bleez'd ower her, an' she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
'Till fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: this he calls a *fause-house*.

* Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.

IX.

Poor Willie, wi' his *bow-kail runt*,
Was *brunt* wi' primsie Mallie;
An' Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compar'd to Willie:
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swoor by *jing*,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

X.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel an' Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
'Till white in ase they're sobbin:
Nell's heart was dancin at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob, stowlins, prie'd her bonie mou,
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.

XI.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel:

She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
An' to the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins grapit for the bauks,
And in the *blue-clue** throws then,
Right fear't that night.

XII.

An' ay she win't, an' ay she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin;
'Till something held within the pat,
Guid L—d! but she was quakin!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin
To spier that night.

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions? Steal out, all alone, to the *kiln*, and, darkling, throw into the *pot* a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand, *wha hauds?* i. e. who holds? and answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the christian and surname of your future spouse.

XIII.

Wee Jenny to her Graunie says,
'Will ye go wi' me, graunnie?
'I'll *eat the apple** *at the glass*,
'I gat frae uncle Johnie:'
She suff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out thro' that night.

XIV.

'Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
'How daur you try sic sportin,
'As seek the foul Thief ony place,
'For him to spae your fortune:
'Nae doubt but ye may get a *sight!*
'Great cause ye hae to fear it;
'For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
'An' liv'd an' di'd deleeret
'On sic a night.

* Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

XV.

'Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
'I mind't as weel's yestreen,
'I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
'I was na past fyfteen:
'The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
'An' stuff was unco green;
'An' ay a rantin kirn we gat,
'And just on *Halloween*
'It fell that night.

XVI.

'Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
'A clever, sturdy fallow;
'His sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
'That liv'd in Achmacalla:
'He gat *hemp-seed**, I mind it weel,
'An' he made unco light o't;
'But monie a day was *by himsel*,
'He was sae sairly frighted
'That vera night.'

* Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed; harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, 'Hemp-seed I saw thee, hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee.' Look over your left shoulder,

XVII.

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could *saw hemp-seed* a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense;
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

XVIII.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin;
The *graip* he for a *harrow* taks,
An' haurls at his curpin:
An' ev'ry now an' then, he says,
'Hemp-seed I saw thee,
'An' her that is to be my lass,
'Come after me, and draw thee
'As fast this night.'

and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, 'come after 'me, and shaw the,' that is, show thyself; in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, 'come 'after me, and harrow thee.'

XIX.

He whistl'd up Lord Lenox' march,
To keep his courage cheary;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd an' eerie:
'Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

XX.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld came rinnin out,
An' hear the sad narration:
He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
'Till stop! she trotted thro' them a';
An' wha was it but *Grumphie*
Asteer that night!

XXI.

Meg fain wad to the *barn* gaen,
To *win three wechts o' nacthing* *;

* This charm must likewise be performed, unperceived, and alone. You go to the *barn*, and open both doors, taking them

But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
An' twa red cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the *barn* she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

XXII.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
An' owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca'
Syne bauldly in she enters:
A *ratton* rattled up the wa',
An' she cry'd L—d preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
An' pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger, that the *being*, about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a *wetch*; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time, an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.

XXIII.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chanc'd the *stack* he *faddom't thrice* *,
Was timmer-propt for thrawin;
He taks a swirlie, auld moss-oak,
For some black, grousome carlin;
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
'Till skin in blypes came haurlin
Aff's nieves that night.

XXIV.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kittlen;
But Och! that night, amang the shaws,
Se got a fearfu' settlin!
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gaed scrievin,
Whare *three laird's lands met at a burn* †,
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

* Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a *Bearstack*, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.

† You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south running spring or rivulet, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and

XXV.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scar it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazle,
Unseen that night.

XXVI.

Amang the brachens, on the brae,
Between her an' the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;
Near lav'rock-height she jumpit,
But mist a fit, an' in the *pool*
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

dip your left shirt sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and, some time near mid-night, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

XXVII.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The *luggies* three* are ranged,
And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin *Mar's-year* did desire,
Because he gat the toom-dish thrice,
He heav'd them on the fire
In wrath that night.

XXVIII.

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
I wat they did na weary;
An' unco tales, an' funnie jokes,
Their sports were cheap an' cheary;

* Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretels, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

'Till *butter'd so'ns* *, wi' fragrant lunt,
Set a' their gabs a-steerin;
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
They parted aff careerin
Fu' blythe that night.

* Sowens with butter instead of milk to them, is always the *Hallowe'en Supper*.

THE AULD FARMER'S

NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

A *GUID New-year* I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a *ripp* to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day,
Thou could hae gaen like onie staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide as white 's a daisy,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glaisie,
A bonny gray:
He should been tight that daur't to *raise* thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A *filly* buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin thou was my guid-father's *meere;*
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my *Jenny,*
Ye then was trottin wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonny *bride:*
An' sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle Stewart I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hoble,
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble,
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,
An' tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, an stood abiegh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At *Brooses* thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them whaizle.
Nae whip nor spur, but jast a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble *fittie-lan'*,
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
On guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindgt, an' fech't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith and pow'r,
'Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labor back to keep,
I gied thy *cog* a wee-bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I ken'd my *Maggie* wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, and sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My *pleugh* is now thy bairn-time a';
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa ha wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin,
An' thy auld days may end in starvin,
For my last *fou*,
A heapit *stimpart*, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether,
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER 1785.

WEE, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring *pattle!*

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' *fellow-mortal!*

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A *daimen icker* in a *thrave*
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit *housie*, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the wins are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thoughtst to dwell,
'Till crash! the cruel *coulter* past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving *foresight* may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' *mice* an' *men*,
Gang aft a-gly,
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' *me!*
The *present* only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna *see*,
I *guess* an' *fear*.

A WINTER NIGHT.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pityless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you,
From seasons such as these?——

Shakespeare.

WHEN biting *Boreas*, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When *Phœbus* gies a short-liv'd glow'r
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreeths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now *Phœbe*, in her midnight reign,
Dark mufflʼd, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crouding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole—

'Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
'And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
'Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
'Not all your rage, as now united, shows
'More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
'Vengeful malice unrepenting,
'Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man bestows!
'See stern oppression's iron grip,
'Or mad ambition's gory hand,
'Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
'Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
'Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
'Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
'How pamper'd luxury, flatt'ry by her side,
'The parasite empoisoning her ear,
'With all the servile wretches in the rear,
'Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
'And eyes the simple rustic hind,
'Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,
'A creature of another kind,
'Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
'Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.
'Where, where is love's fond, tender throe,
'With lordly honor's lofty brow,
'The pow'rs you proudly own?
'Is there, beneath love's noble name,
'Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
'To bless himself alone!

'Mark maiden-innocence a prey
'To love-pretending snares,
'This boasted honor turns away,
'Shunning soft pity's rising sway,
'Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray'rs!
'Perhaps, this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest,
'She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
'And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking
'blast!
'O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
'Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
'Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
'Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
'Ill-satisfy'd keen nature's clam'rous call,
'Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to
'sleep,
'While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
'Chill, o'er his slumbers, piles the drifty
'heap!
'Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
'Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
'Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
'But shall thy legal rage pursue
'The wretch, already crushed low
'By cruel fortune's undeserved blow?
'Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
'A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!'

I heard nae mair, for *Chanticleer*
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Thro' all his works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles GOD.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET*.

January ——

I.

WHILE winds frae aff *Ben-Lomond* blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great folk's gift,
That live sae bien an' snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker and canker,
To see their cursed pride.

* *David Sillar*, one of the club at Tarbolton, and author of a volume of poems in the Scottish dialect. E.

II.

It 's hardly in a body's pow'r,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair't:
But *Davie*, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang 's we're hale and fier:
'Mair spier na, no fear na','*
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only for to beg.

III.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile,

* Ramsay.

And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

IV.

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne *rhyme* till't, we'll time till't,
And sing 't when we hae done.

V.

Its no in titles nor in rank;
Its no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
Its no in makin muckle *mair:*
Its no in books; its no in lear,
To make us truly blest:

If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang;
The *heart* ay's the part ay,
That makes us right or wrang.

VI.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil,
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless, and fearless
Of either heav'n or hell!
Esteeming, and deeming
It's a' an idle tale!

VII.

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,

By pining at our state;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel;
They make us see the naked truth,
The *real* guid and ill.
Tho' losses, and crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

VIII.

But tent me, *Davie*, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
And joys the very best.
There's a' the *pleasures o' the heart*,
The lover an' the frien';
Ye hae your *Meg*, your dearest part,
And I my darling *Jean!*
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her *name:*
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

IX.

O' all ye pow'rs who rule above!
O *Thou*, whose very self art *love!*
Thou knows't my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou *Being*, All-seeing,
O, hear my fervent pray'r;
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

X.

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow;
Long since this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.

It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My *Davie* or my *Jean*.

XI.

O, how that *name* inspires my style!
The words come skelpin rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet *Pegasus* will limp,
'Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
And rin an unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then,
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty wizen'd hide.

THE LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself!
And sweet *Affection* prove the spring of woe.
Home.

I.

O THOU pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan unwarming beam;
And mourn in lamentation deep,
How *life* and *love* are all a dream.

II.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft attested pow'rs above:
The *promis'd Father's tender name:*
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown:
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and hers alone!

And must I think it! is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

V.

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth;
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share and make them less?

VI.

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a *wish* to gild the gloom!

VII.

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

VIII.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore-harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

IX.

O thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse,
Now highest reigns't, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!

The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual kindling eye.

X.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes, never, never, to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.